

CH/D/Z

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17 June 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: MACV's OB Update for 31 May 1968

1. MACV's OB update, 68-5-1, for the end of May 1968 shows VC/NVA Main and Local Forces at a new strength of 127,306 of which 77,214 are NVA in NVA units. This figure represents an increase of 4,740 over MACV's end April estimate of 122,566 troops including 71,988 NVA.
2. Analysis of the information contained in the MACV OB update message indicates, however, that in actuality MACV is estimating that VC/NVA Main and Local Forces strength decreased by 1,705 troops during May. A net decrease in troop strength during May can be derived as follows.
3. During May MACV dropped twelve units or 1,205 troops from their holdings. These are units which are believed to have been dissolved or formed into new units. Although the units were dropped in May, they were retroactively dropped as of April or earlier. Accordingly, the 1,205 can be subtracted from MACV's end April figure of 122,566.
4. Similarly, MACV has accepted 15 new units with a total additional strength of 7,690. These are mainly units which have been pending acceptance for some time and include most of the units agreed upon as add-ons at the OB conference in April. All of the units are retroactively added to the OB as of April or earlier. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the new units can be added to MACV's end April figure. Thus:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 122,566 \\
 - 1,205 \text{ units dropped} \\
 + 7,690 \text{ new units}
 \end{array}$$

129,051

5. The MACV OB update also gives adjustments in strengths to individual units. Net gains and losses to specific units effective as of April and earlier amount to a decrease of 40 troops. Subtracting 40 from 129,051--129,011--results in a derived retroactive strength figure for the end of April. If the end of May figure--127,306--is subtracted from the new end of April figure, a net decrease of 1,705 results.

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6. Net gains and losses to individual units occurring in May are a minus 1,305. If subtracted from the retroactive April figure, the result is 127,706, or 400 greater than the actual figure given by MACV for the end of May.

7. MACV's May CB does not appear to reflect any significant increase in average enemy maneuver battalion strength. VC/NVA force structure continues to grow without any apparent increase in unit strengths. Further analysis of average unit strengths will be done in the near future.

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